

Issue—10

Polychrome

# Manual

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## **Manual**

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### **Issue — 10 / Spring 2018 / *Polychrome***

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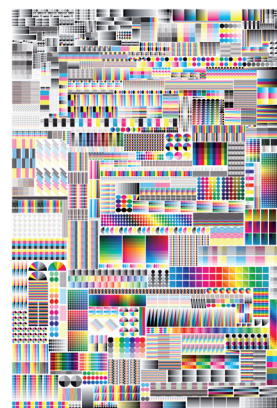
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(cover)

Susan Hiller  
American, b. 1940  
Small Study for *Homage to Marcel Duchamp*, 2012  
From the series  
*Billboard for Edinburgh*  
Color inkjet print on paper  
Image: 25.4 × 33.9 cm. (10 × 13 3/8 in.)  
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. J. Scott Burns  
2015.135.3.17  
© 2018 Artists Rights Society (ARS),  
New York / DACS, London



(inside cover)

Fanette Mellier Vauchez  
French, b. 1977  
*Specimen* (detail), 2008  
Double-sided offset lithograph  
on paper  
175 × 118.6 cm. (68 3/4 × 46 1/8 in.)  
Gift of the artist 2015.53  
© Fanette Mellier Vauchez  
Courtesy of the artist





Michael Lasuchin  
American, b. Russia, 1923–2006  
*TRIAD*, 1976  
Screenprint on paper  
Sheet: 52.1 × 36.8 cm. (20 ½ × 14 ½ in.)  
Gift of Ruth Fine and Larry Day 2012.136.52  
© Michael Lasuchin



**David Batchelor** is an artist and writer based in London. Over the last twenty-five years his color-based work has been exhibited and published internationally.

**Gina Borrromeo** is curator of ancient art at the RISD Museum, where she is currently exploring polychromy on works of ancient art. With conservator Ingrid Neuman, she is now studying the painted panels from the Fayum region of Egypt.

**Nicole Buchanan** believes art can bring light to hot topics in ways that inspire real change. Like photographer Gordon Parks, she uses photography as a weapon to influence, trick, and even change the minds of others.

**Catherine Cooper** is a postdoctoral research volunteer at the RISD Museum. Her research focuses on applications of analytical chemistry in archaeology and conservation of art and artifacts.

**Darby English** is the Carl Darling Buck Professor at the University of Chicago, where he teaches modern and contemporary art and cultural studies. He is also adjunct curator in the Department of Painting and Sculpture at the Museum of Modern Art, New York.

**Mara L. Hermano** is RISD's vice president of integrated planning. Born in Manila, she received her MA from NYU's Institute of Fine Arts and has published on Filipino art and artists. She worked at New York arts organizations before discovering the opportunities and challenges of art-school administration.

**Elon Cook Lee** serves as the program director and curator for the Center for Reconciliation, works as a consultant interpreting slavery and race for historic sites around the country, and teaches the "Rhode Island and the Rememory of Slavery" course at RISD.

**Josephine Lee** is a professor of English and Asian American studies at the University of Minnesota–Twin Cities. Her research interests include modern and contemporary theater and drama, race and performance, and Asian American studies.

**Evelyn Lincoln** is a professor of the history of art and architecture and Italian studies at Brown University, and writes about the history of prints and printing in early modern Italy.

**Dominic Molon** is the Richard Brown Baker Curator of Contemporary Art at the RISD Museum. His next project, scheduled to open in May 2018, is *The Phantom of Liberty*, a major presentation of the museum's contemporary collection.

**Maureen C. O'Brien** is the curator of painting and sculpture at the RISD Museum and a specialist in nineteenth-century American and European painting. Author of *Edgar Degas: Six Friends at Dieppe*, she has a particular interest in relationships between artists and their subjects.

**RISD Museum 2017 Summer Teen Intensive Students** worked as a group and as individual artists to explore the RISD Museum collection through creative critical thinking. This iteration of the project was by Cecily Nishimura, Lee Dussault, Madelyn Perez, Marissa Stanzione, and Travis Bonanca.

**Elizabeth A. Williams** is the David and Peggy Rockefeller Curator of Decorative Arts and Design at the RISD Museum, where she is currently working on an exhibition and publication celebrating silver made by the Gorham Manufacturing Company between 1850 and 1970.



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# On Polychrome and Letting Go

Darby English

A provisional definition of polychrome, for the sake of getting underway: *simultaneous colors at a single point in space; or, a case where the inconsistency of blended color gives rise to a predicament of naming.* Then a sculptor friend asked, “What color *isn’t* polychrome?” italicizing that one bit to make her exasperation plain.

A particularly modern way of insisting on the separateness of things welcomed the idea of “local color,” which has dominated late theory and practice in visual arts. Local color provides an excellent means of compensating for colors’ tendency to spread and converge: keeping colors pure makes color, in spite of its diversities, seem only too happy to remain in its proper place. By differently forceful means, countless other cultural and social practices insist on the separation of colors, as though to promote color’s willing submission to a separating agency as some kind of exemplary moral attitude. Exhibit A: race.

Polychrome didn’t get the memo.

In nature, polychrome is the default position. For example, take the leaf that’s been on my desk since November. Starting out as a harbinger of spring, it became a beacon of summer’s flourish before foretelling winter’s stoppages. The numerous ways of color (and shape and size and texture) visibly animating this thing’s life—these tell us that it’s real. As I wrote this, I collected some accounts of its color. They reminded me that, among colored things, there are many factors language cannot possess without losing its composure. My leaf turned out to be red and brown with a streak of green. A bright tan draws the perimeter of this streak. The brown I mentioned a minute ago is the hue of the veins that cover the whole field; these are most visible where the field is red. What color is this leaf? Does it even have a color? Of course it hasn’t got a color in any accepted sense of “having.” It has color—boy does it have color. But it would be better to say it comprises colors. Because one can speak truthfully of *its* color (singular) only by referring to its proliferation of colors (plural). It compels its describer to adopt a flexible attitude to color, singular. The chromatic identity of this leaf sets up, but never can settle, in the terminally unstable activity of color relations. In this usage, “relations” has the same sense it does when we talk of encounters with other people. And so it feels a scandal, a miniscule one but one that matters, to communicate as though any one color could claim this leaf as its property.





Joseph Urban, designer  
American, b. Austria, 1872–1933  
Wiener Werkstätte of America, Inc., manufacturer  
American, 1922–1924  
*Armchair*, 1922  
Laminated wood, synthetic mother-of-pearl,  
reproduction silk upholstery  
108 × 73.7 × 85.1 cm. (42½ × 29 × 33½ in.)  
Helen M. Danforth Acquisition Fund 2004.4

Polychrome and its cognate concepts—*mixed*, *trans*-, and *post*- come to mind first—help by showing up the worldly realness of that which doesn't bow to wording, that which will not be *worded*. Polychrome is already reconciled with the dynamic nature of color that our color-word usages obscure, and sometimes downright conceal. In the face of this, the durability of our color words suggests that our colors do us a particular service: these terribly conservative symbols are crucial images of fixity and preservation. These word-images display a particular quality frozen within a discrete and specifiable area, as though it were impervious to change. Polychrome shows this to be a fantasy. It drives the point home by eliciting from us a kind of nonsense: no one of our color words will do, and no preexisting combination of them can account for its constituent colors' uneven concentration. Mocking the staid posture of color words, polychrome clings to the swirl of physical and metaphysical relations that brings it into being.

In so-called life, polychromatic color engages in motions that elude conscious tracking and control. Think of the convoluted, impure chroma of multicolored phenomena, natural and synthetic. Think of parti-colored things worn or used to festoon a space: generally these announce a temporary suspension of order. Talk about them is conspicuously short on words for discrete colors and long on ones that aim to capture their affective appeal. Of multicolored things, we say they're "just ... FUN!" An integral characteristic, their mereness lends them a specific vitality. They help us oppose gravity, occasion by occasion.

In art, especially, polychrome invites us to the dialogue that colors are always having amongst themselves. A history of polychrome could be a series of poems exchanged among colors. The exchange might exhibit something like perpetual newness, again and again revealing differently bent hues and movingly novel blends. It would be a short-line poetry, excruciatingly sensitive to tone. Its speakers would have no names, so it would confuse the psychology of human orientation. In this connection, a warning against rendering polychrome as a pure positive seems in order: the parties to this dialogue talk at cross-purposes, always on the brink of divorcing. Polychrome can offend and destroy. It conscripts discrete colors in order to sacrifice them. Does polychrome offend by mocking our own failure to connect? In any case, polychrome has an advanced idiom for dealing with conflict. It's at home with uncertainty.

1 It seems fitting that it was a philosopher of ordinary language, Ludwig Wittgenstein, tinkering at the end of his life with new shapes for long-resident reflections, who provided the modern era's most dependable theory of color by dismantling the correspondences on which scientific approaches rely. *Remarks on Colour* (1950), Wittgenstein's pointedly counter-empirical experiment, lays bare the extraordinary demand of consistency that technical and theoretical usages make upon color by contrasting these with the illimitable flexibility that color shows in conversational usage. That theory, which I long ago assimilated, is an indispensable ingredient in my account of the leaf.

# From the Files

## Building Brilliance: French Block-Printed Wallpaper by Elizabeth A. Williams

Spring 2018

Blue, green, yellow, red, brown, pink, peach, and many shades thereof. However many colors can be counted was the number of printing blocks required to produce this wallpaper, manufactured by the preeminent Parisian workshops of Réveillon. Beginning as a merchant selling imported English wallpapers, Jean-Baptiste Réveillon soon built an enterprise, producing wallpaper in his own workshops, which were ultimately awarded the title of *Manufacture Royale* by Louis XVI in 1784.

The wallpaper's brilliant palette was meticulously built one component at a time, with each color vying for the consumer's attention. Rendered in soft red, deep rose, and light pink, the ribboned garlands held aloft by the trios of putti would have required three printing blocks alone, carefully carved by wood engravers from finely grained pearwood. Known for producing complex compositions created by the leading designers of the city, Réveillon made papers in three categories: single color; *commun* (common) prints, printed from seven or eight blocks; and luxury collections requiring more than ninety blocks.

One of more than five hundred examples of French wallpaper acquired by the RISD Museum in 1934 from the wide-ranging collections of the French engraver and painter Charles Huard and his wife, Frances Wilson Huard, this paper is the product of a modern manufacturing system refined by Réveillon, whose business employed more than three hundred people by 1789. Among the ranks were color grinders, who ground the various minerals that composed the wallpapers' color spectrum. Réveillon also employed several chemists who were in charge of preparing the pigments and colors for printing. They would have overseen the introduction of water-based distemper paint, composed mainly of pigment, calcium carbonate (chalk), water, and a binder. The distemper's water base was a significant technological advance, and allowed for quick drying, leaving a highly saturated deposit of rich matte color.

Manual

Artists:	Jean-Baptiste Réveillon, French, 1725-1811 manufacturer
Object:	Wallpaper, ca. 1780
Materials:	Woodblock-printed wallpaper
Dimensions:	131 x 57.5 cm. (51 9/16 x 22 5/8 in.)
Acquisition:	Mary B. Jackson Fund 34.942









FIG.1

assume vivid astro focus  
Founded 2001 by Eli Sudbrack  
(American, b. Brazil, 1968)  
with the participation of  
Christophe Hamaide Pierson  
(French, b. 1973)  
*The Ecstasy of Pope Benedict XVI*,  
2005  
Chain curtain  
Shown in *Ecstasy: In and  
About Altered States*,  
Geffen Contemporary (MoCA),  
Los Angeles, 2005–2006  
228.6 × 92.4 × 1.3 cm.  
(90 × 36 3/4 × 1/2 in.)  
Gift of Avo Samuelian and  
Hector Manuel Gonzalez 2017.19.4  
Photo courtesy of the artist



# Chains of Love and Rage

assume vivid astro focus's  
*Ecstasy of Pope Benedict XVI*

Dominic Molon

Created in 1978, the rainbow flag has come to represent the LGBTQIA community's collective and international sense of pride, and is one of the most recognized and powerful evocations of the symbolic resonance of color. Its seven stripes combine to convey diversity and inclusivity, while individually representing life (red), healing (orange), sunlight (yellow), nature (green), harmony/peace (blue), and spirit (purple). The rainbow flag builds affirmatively on the legacy of culturally representative invocations of color, underscoring qualities of immediacy and universality and conjuring positive cultural associations such as the Judeo-Christian symbolism of its appearance as a sign of the hope of God's covenant after the Flood and the famous song "Over the Rainbow" from the 1939 film *The Wizard of Oz*. Other chromatic associations with political or collective identities in recent history range from international Green parties and the ascription of red to the



Communist party, to national soccer teams such as France's Les Bleus and Italy's Azzuri, to the notorious Brownshirts and Blackshirts in mid-twentieth-century Fascist Germany and Italy, respectively. According to the flag's designer, artist and activist Gilbert Baker, it was created as a response to an earlier symbolic representation of gays and lesbians as a group—the Nazis' use of a pink triangle as a form of classification towards persecution. “They had a whole code of emblems that they used to oppress people, and we needed something to answer that,” Baker said in an interview in 2015. “The rainbow was perfect because of its associations with diversity, beauty and nature.”<sup>1</sup>

The sculptural installation *The Ecstasy of Pope Benedict XVI* (2005, FIG. 1) by assume vivid astro focus features the pride flag playing an unusually antagonistic role in relationship to a black and white image of the titular German pontiff, who led the Roman Catholic Church from 2005 until his resignation in 2013. assume vivid astro focus (or avaf), formed in New York City in 2001 by Eli Sudbrack (born in Rio de Janeiro in 1968) and Christophe Hamaide-Pierson (born in Paris in 1973), is self-described as a “duo that sometimes morphs into a collective depending on the projects [being] work[ed] on.”<sup>2</sup> This installation is a chain-link curtain originally produced as part of a much larger installation (titled *homocrap #1*, FIG. 2) conceived for the 2005 exhibition *Ecstasy: In and About Altered States* at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles. avaf here eschewed the hallucinogenic associations with “ecstasy” for the more spiritual and transcendent connotations of the word—particularly those related to a state of extreme joy and blissful freedom. Sudbrack describes the installation as having been conceived to resemble a disco to pay “homage to the history of clubs and dance music and their close relationship to the birth of gay rights, at least in America. Clubs were not just simply hedonistic heavens, but spaces for unity within that community.”<sup>3</sup> *The Ecstasy of Pope Benedict XVI* was placed at the entrance of the installation, requiring active physical interaction with the work to experience avaf's project in its entirety. Additionally, oversized masks with faces of transgender friends were distributed at the entrance of the installation, ensuring that the majority of those passing through the curtain would be identified—even if only temporarily—as transgender.

Benedict XVI's negative positions on homosexuality continued to be clarified throughout his papacy; a New York Times report from 2008 stated, “Pope Benedict XVI spoke out ... against homosexual behavior, calling it a violation of the natural order. In an address to the Vatican hierarchy, the pope called for an ‘ecology of man’ to protect man from ‘the destruction of himself.’”<sup>4</sup> As a response to

FIG. 2  
assume vivid astro focus  
*homocrap #1*, 2005  
Mixed-media installation  
Shown in *Ecstasy: In and About Altered States*,  
Geffen Contemporary (MoCA), Los Angeles,  
2005–2006  
Photo courtesy of the artist







these declarations, avaf “decided to create a chain curtain—the material also relating to historical Christian practices such as self-flagellation as a ‘mortification of the flesh’ as a form of repentance and atonement for one’s sins—with an image of a saluting pope being attacked by an upside-down rainbow triangle.” While nothing as aggressive as an attack actually appears in the work, simply placing the pope against that background in an ongoing, “post-truth” present defined more by appearance than reality is tantamount to an assault of sorts. An additional and intentional layer of symbolic complexity arises in the use of the triangle, simultaneously collapsing into one geometric form allusions to Benedict’s complicated past as a member of the Hitler Youth and the Wehrmacht as a young man, the Nazis’ use of the pink triangle, and activist group Act Up’s rehabilitation of that form in their 1987 Silence=Death campaign to protest the U.S. government’s homophobic reluctance to respond to the AIDS crisis. (This was echoed in the original *Ecstasy* installation by an animated neon piece with upside-down “crying” triangles to the left of the Benedict curtain.)

The title plays subversively on the more reverential and devotional nature of other religious figures depicted in a state of spiritual ecstasy throughout art history—specifically Gian Lorenzo Bernini’s Baroque sculptural masterpiece, *The Ecstasy of Saint Teresa* (1647–1652), in which the subject appears in a simultaneously sacred and profane state. avaf’s work challenges Benedict’s indictment of the ecstatic experience of a broad cross-section of humanity—if not his impugning their basic human rights altogether—by encouraging him towards an ecstasy he cannot or would prefer not to appreciate or comprehend.

The rhetoric used by avaf to turn the rainbow flag into a “weapon” of sorts departs insistently from some of the key values (such as healing and harmony) that selected colors were intended to signify and promote. In this sense, the work encourages debate between the moral values as espoused by Benedict as a representative of the Catholic Church and those represented by the rainbow flag. How does one human collective (those who identify themselves with the Catholic religion) define life and the experience thereof differently than another human collective (the international LGBTQIA community)? Or define or experience healing, sunlight, nature, harmony and peace, and spirit, for that matter? How would members of the LGBTQIA community who practice Catholicism reconcile the ideals the rainbow flag represents with the statements made by the leader of the church, and by extension, the church itself? avaf’s deliberately provocative layering of oppositional visual codes and entities demonstrates the manner by which the basic combination of an abstract color pattern and the photographic representation of a notable personage



invokes a debate between the philosophies and perspectives of immense contingencies of the global population.

The format of *The Ecstasy of Pope Benedict XVI* is significant not only in terms of its original function as doorway to a larger installation but also regarding the symbolism of doors in general, and the curtain-door as representative of a particular historical or cultural moment. Diaphanous curtain-doors made of beads (or in this instance chain link) are still, perhaps, most readily associated with 1960s hippie counterculture, or with their more “normalized” presence in domestic settings in the 1970s and thereafter. They create a boundary between spaces, but only just, intimating a simultaneous sense of privacy and accessibility. This interior architectural ethos might have aligned perfectly with the ideals of a younger generation endeavoring to eradicate numerous boundaries (social, sexual, racial, and so on), but it is very much at odds with the institution of the Catholic Church, steeped in millennia of established and inflexible dogma. Consider the manner in which the doors to Catholic churches and especially cathedrals are defined by their visual and literal heaviness and imposing near-impenetrability. The sculpture’s visual content is thus perfectly married to its material base by rendering the head of a church defined by its stolidity (theological, ideological, and architectural) on a structure characterized by flexibility and permeability, and with diametrically opposed cultural associations.

The formal decision to contrast the black and white image of Pope Benedict with the polychrome rainbow flag adds still another dimension of meaning to the work. It pits the flag’s unified presence of various color stripes, each maintaining its own integrity yet working together as part of a larger whole, against a figure whose chromatic presence reflects, perhaps, the Catholic Church’s black-and-white “with us or against us” position on a spectrum of social, cultural, and political concerns, including, and in this instance especially, homosexuality. This engagement of the power of color to signify aspects of human collectivity, as well as divisiveness and exclusion, is framed within a work that embodies art’s capacity to act politically, and to do so with improbably interlinked lightness and rage.

<sup>1</sup> “Pride flag creator Gilbert Baker on the rainbow’s real meaning” (Gilbert Baker interview with Talia Schlanger), June 26, 2015, <http://www.cbc.ca/radio/q/schedule-for-friday-june-26-2015-1.3128742/pride-flag-creator-gilbert-baker-on-the-rainbow-s-real-meaning-1.3128763>.

<sup>2</sup> Email correspondence with Eli Sudbrack, October 11, 2017.

<sup>3</sup> Email correspondence with Eli Sudbrack, March 16, 2017.

<sup>4</sup> Rachel Donadio, “The Vatican: In Speech, Pope Calls Homosexual Behavior a Violation,” *New York Times*, December 22, 2008, A11.

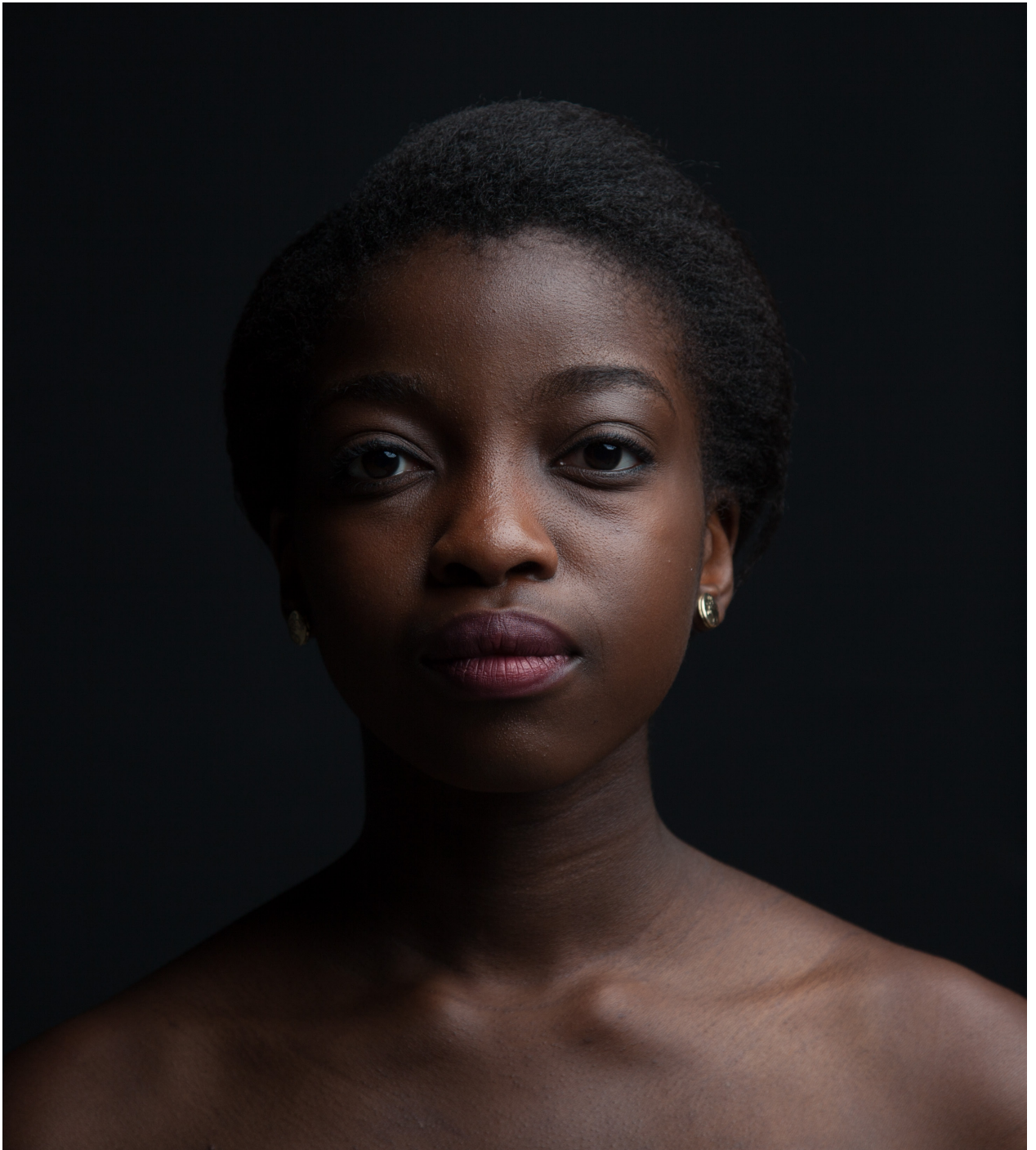
<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

# Nicole Buchanan

Racial strife is as old as our nation. Violence around recent incidents between African American communities and the police has reached such a crescendo that it may mark a second coming of the civil rights movement. As an artist, I wanted my photographic portraits to express my hope for peace and my outrage at the unfair treatment of seemingly innocent individuals.

*The Skin I'm In* asks the viewer to consider the dignity of individuals who self-identify as African, African American, or from the wider African diaspora.... Each person is emerging from a black background in the tradition of the Italian painter Caravaggio,...stepping out of a darkness filled with fear, misunderstanding, and confusion, into a rightful sense of identity. The resplendent range of skin tones and textures portrayed helps to challenge the stereotype of these individuals being viewed similarly, while their deliberately impartial expressions, neither aggressive nor submissive, defy easy racial presumptions by viewers. The uniformity of composition underscores our similarities, while each portrait possesses particular features and nuances that demonstrate the individual's personal dignity. It is my hope that these portraits help people own that each of us merits respect, whatever skin we're in.

Nicole Buchanan (RISD BFA 2011, Photography)  
American, b. 1993  
From the series *The Skin I'm In*  
Color inkjet prints.  
Each image: 38.1 × 38.1 cm. (15 × 15 in.)



*ZE\_27* (detail), 2015

Gift of the artist and Gallery Kayafas  
© Nicole Buchanan





*KB\_09 (detail), 2015*

Museum purchase in honor of Barnet Fain; Helen M. Danforth Acquisition Fund  
2016.79.5 © Nicole Buchanan



*IN\_08* (detail), 2015

Museum purchase in honor of Barnet Fain; Helen M. Danforth Acquisition Fund  
2016.79.3 © Nicole Buchanan





*JS\_24* (detail), 2015

Museum purchase in honor of Barnet Fain; Helen M. Danforth Acquisition Fund  
2016.79.4 © Nicole Buchanan





*DG\_14* (detail), 2015

Gift of the artist and Gallery Kayafas  
© Nicole Buchanan



*DM\_25 (detail), 2015*

Museum purchase in honor of Barnet Fain; Helen M. Danforth Acquisition Fund  
2016.79.2 © Nicole Buchanan





*SM\_06* (detail), 2015

Museum purchase in honor of Barnet Fain; Helen M. Danforth Acquisition Fund  
2016.79.1 © Nicole Buchanan





*NT\_42 (detail), 2015*

Gift of the artist and Gallery Kayafas  
© Nicole Buchanan

# Portfolio

27  
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80

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objects are identified on page 78







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Spring 2018



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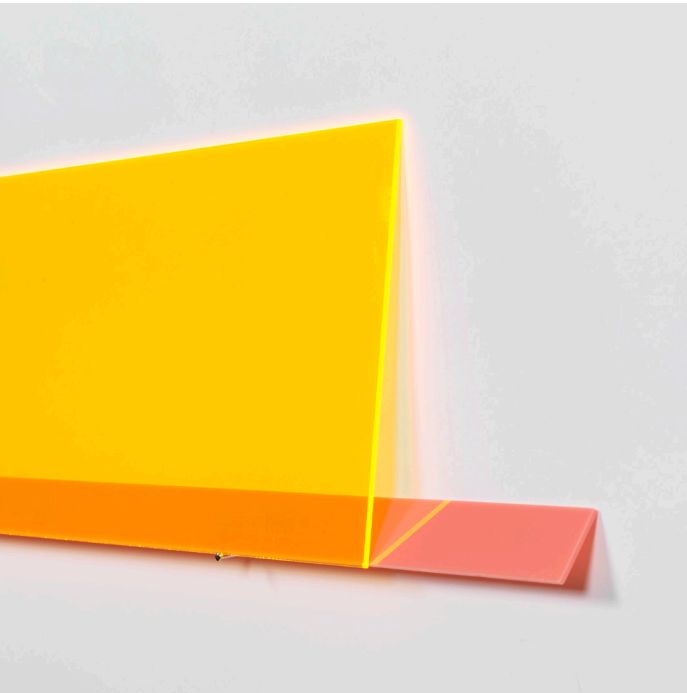


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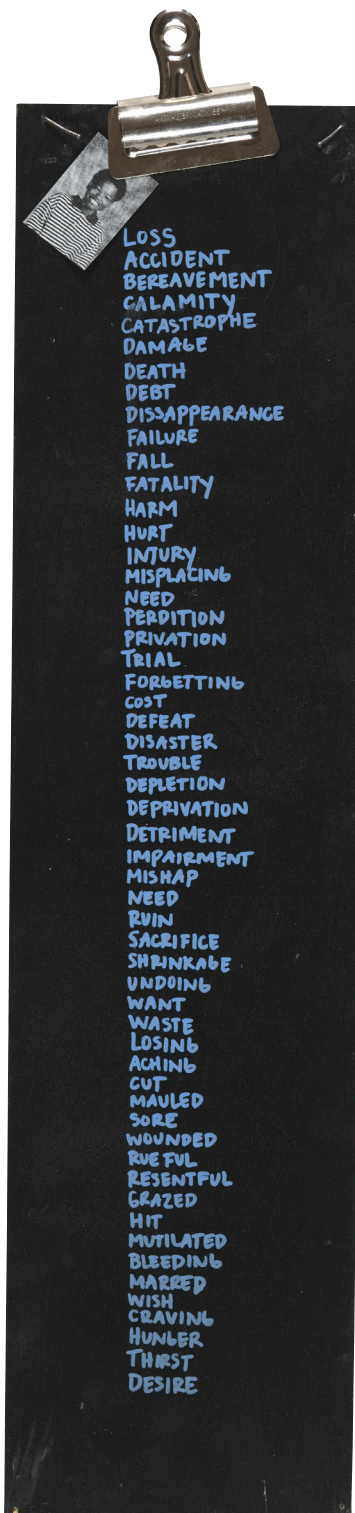


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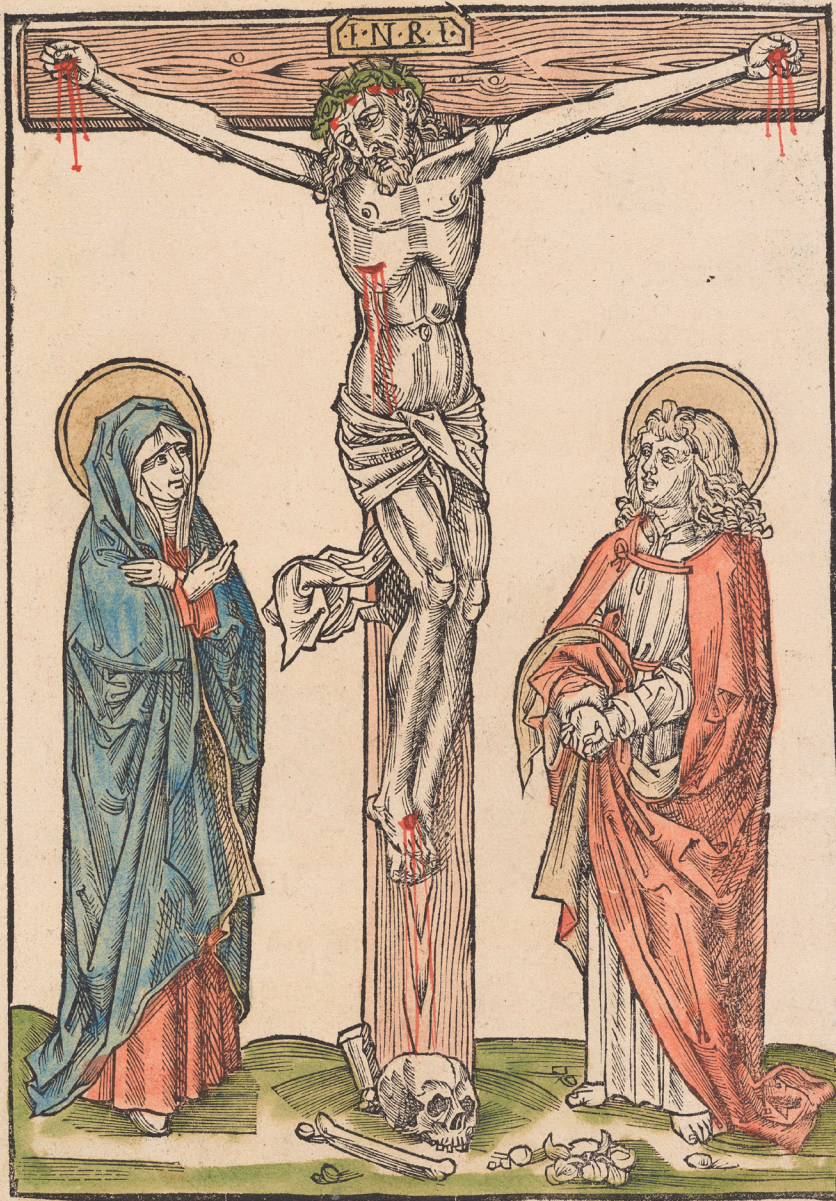


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Ex Missali Ordin. majoris ecclesie hildensemensis

1490 creiter.

c1836



# Reading Red in a German Missal

Evelyn Lincoln

There are, strictly speaking, only three figures in this simple German woodcut print, four if you count Adam, who is not in good shape—just a skull and some scattered bones anachronistically scattered on the ground below the wooden cross on which Jesus hangs, still lying around so many centuries later (FIG. 1). The arms of the wooden cross take up almost the whole top portion of the carved wooden block, like a beam supporting not only the bleeding body of the crucified man, but the entire image as well. Three streams of red blood drip from Christ's palms, his fingers curled over the clearly delineated nail that fastens each hand to the beam at the top corners of the print, and also from the nail driven through both feet. Four carefully applied red dots on his forehead show us where thorns were thrust into his scalp from a makeshift crown earlier in the day. Three more bright

43  
/  
80

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FIG. 1 & FIG. 5 (detail, pages 48–49)

German

*Crucifixion with the Virgin Mary and*

*St. John the Evangelist, 1490–1500*

Woodcut with hand coloring on paper

Sheet: 32 × 20.3 cm. (12 5/8 × 8 in.)

Gift of Mrs. Gustav Radeke 29.037

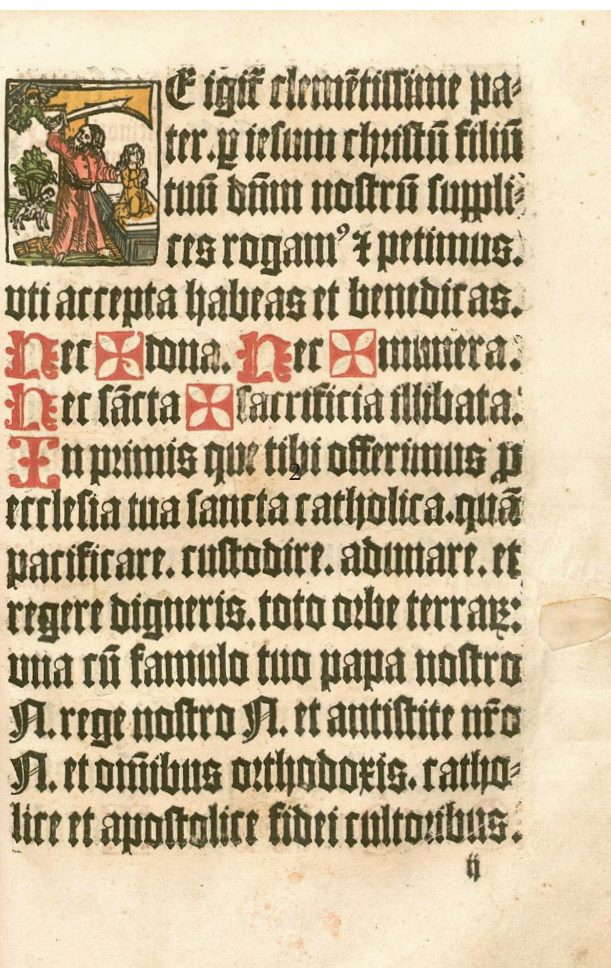
red lines descending from the half-moon-shaped wound in his side record an event that took place after the crowning with thorns and the Crucifixion. The chronology of these insults to his body, and the personal importance of the colorful lines painted over the black and white woodcut, would be perfectly clear to anyone looking at the print as an illustration in the book in which it was meant to appear.

Versions of this picture of the Crucifixion were regularly inserted into missals, the books containing the texts (a calendar, the Gospels and other New Testament readings, prayers, psalms, and songs) used for saying Mass in a Catholic church. Before 1570, when an official Roman missal appeared following recommendations by the Council of Trent, there were different versions of this manual compiled for the priests who were celebrating Mass. In some of these books, a full-page woodblock image of Christ on the cross—flanked on one side by his mother, the Virgin Mary, and on the other by the Apostle John—was placed opposite the first page of the canon of the Mass, which begins with the Latin “Te igitur, clementissime Pater, per Iesum Christum Filium tuum Dominum nostrum, supplices rogamus ac petimus” (FIG. 2): “To you, therefore, most merciful Father, we make humble prayer and petition through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord.”<sup>1</sup> The canon is a collection of prayers and the most important part of the missal. By the beginning of the sixteenth century, when this print was made, the canon usually began at the center of the missal: the place to which the book most easily opened. An image of the Crucifixion encapsulating the Christian story in three spare figures with no background or excess detail either in line or color would be available to the reader without much fuss.





FIG. 2  
Hildesheim Missal, Nuremberg, 1511  
Bavarian State Library, Munich  
VD16 M 5580,  
urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb00018595-5



Other impressions of the RISD woodcut appear as the only full-page image in the Hildesheim Missal (Missale Hildensemense), which was first printed in 1499 by George Stuchs. That famous printer of liturgical books was originally from Sulzbach, near Frankfurt, and had set up his press and busy publishing operation in Nuremberg. Since the RISD sheet has no printing on the back (either in the RISD impression, or in other impressions still to be found in intact missals), it could have been cut out of a missal, or it might also have circulated as a single-sheet devotional print. The missal, and, it seems, the woodcut Crucifixion, went through further editions into the second decade of the sixteenth century. The coloring, done by hand, was a

common feature of this kind of illustration and could have been executed at any time, either by the publishing house or by any one of the book's readers, and this has to be taken into consideration when thinking about the motives for painting on a page of a book.

The RISD version of the canon Crucifixion was at the same time more elegantly rendered and more pared down than many woodcut canon pictures, as others also included angels flying up to collect Christ's blood in chalices, the weeping Magdalene throwing herself down at the foot of the cross, or other references to definitive moments of Christ's Passion that a reader might expect to see. Some canon Crucifixions, like that of the Missale Augustense of 1510 (FIG. 3), might be printed as plainly as the RISD example but then embellished by hand with gold leaf and brilliant colors, including a rosy blush on the cheeks of the living and a gray pallor on the face of Jesus. The image as printed in 1517 for another missal from Nuremberg was framed with a floral printed border, and the woodcutter invited more nuanced hand-coloring

45  
~  
80

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by including the clouds that darkened the sky at the moment of the Crucifixion, according to the Gospels. This detail prompted the colorist to silhouette Christ against a deep gray cloud and then to carefully add a paler cloudy background that does nothing to dim the brilliance of John's vermillion cloak or the glow of the haloes, applied in gold (FIG. 4).

The primary readers of missals like this one were priests. The modern clarity of the RISD print shows how the image meant to activate the story of Christ's Passion in the mind of learned readers such as these. The more learned the reader, the less narrative had to be shown in the image. Because the image is so spare, it is also very strong, iconic, and monumental seeming: every part of it was deliberately rendered to convey meaning. Images meant to cue a reader's memory were thought to work best when they were clear, vivid, and brightly lit, colorful but not colored to make it seem like a richly embroidered book cover, as we see in the title page from a German New Testament printed in 1541, also in RISD's collection (FIG. 6). The Stuchs print is distinctly colored with an eye to helping the viewer better imagine, in a personal and yet intellectual way, the Christian story: the suffering of Christ, his death on the cross, his role in the redemption of the sin of Adam, and the opportunity for salvation that the ritual of Mass offers to believers. The only bit of text on the page appears in the sign nailed to the cross, and it refers us to the Passion, when Christ had been brought before the people and mocked as the





4

FIG. 3

Augsburg Missal, Basel, 1510  
 Bavarian State Library, Munich  
 VD16 M 5555,  
 urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb00004910-2

FIG. 4

Missal According to the Rite of the  
 Church of Eichstatt (printed with  
 the approval of Gabriel, bishop of  
 Eichstatt), Nuremberg, 1517  
 Bavarian State Library, Munich  
 VD16 M 5570,  
 urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb00013026-7

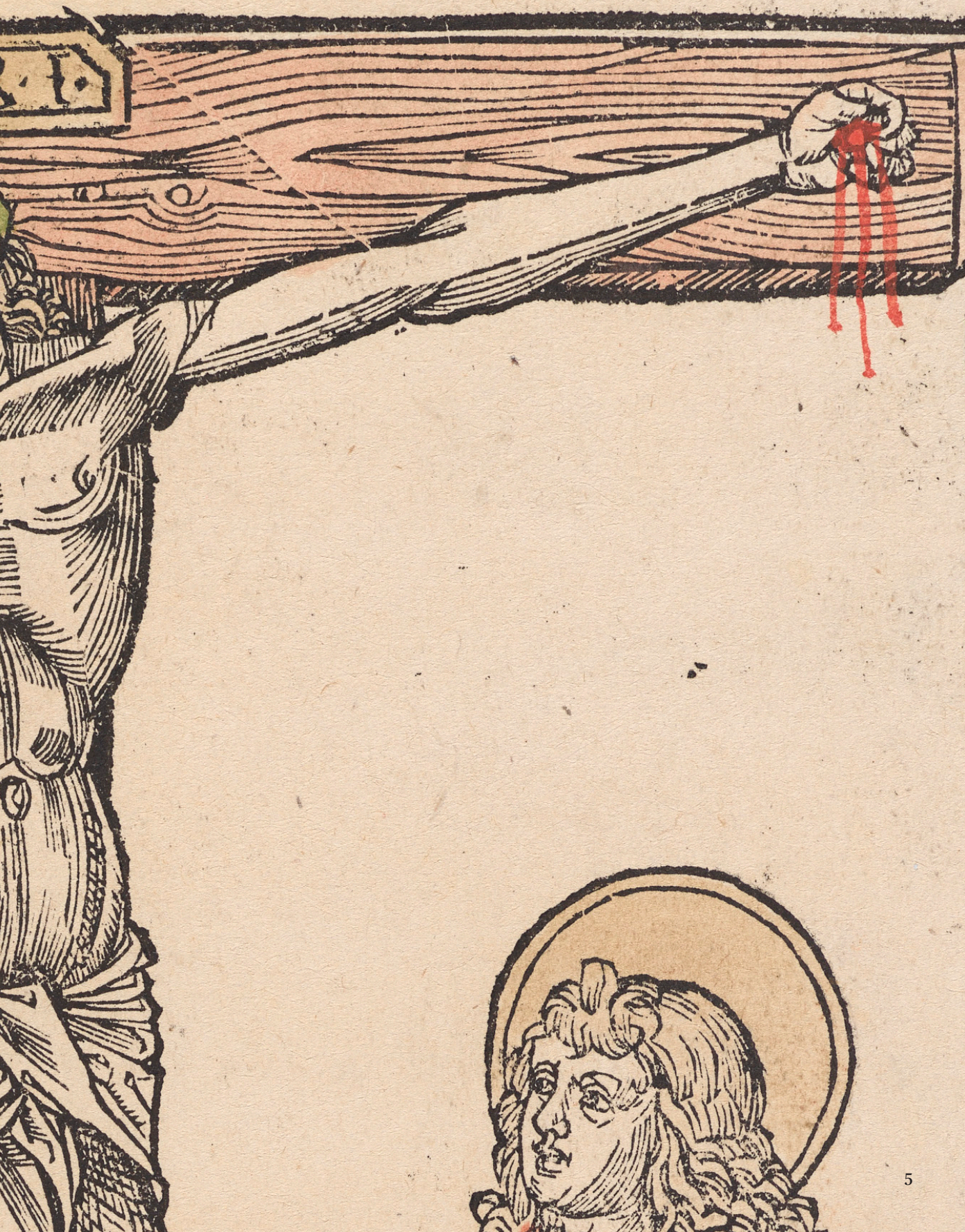
King of the Jews earlier in the day. First he was flogged, then crowned with a circlet of thorns and cloaked in a purple cloth before being taken outside and displayed to the crowds. From there he was made to carry the large wooden cross to Calvary, where he was nailed to it, and where he died.

The colorist who added the blood to the image in figures 3 and 4 was thinking somewhat naturalistically about how blood would flow, and showed it coursing from Christ's wrist down his arm, outlining the figure in red against the background. In the RISD image the schematic triads of blood from Christ's hands are symmetrically arrested high in midair, each deliberately ending in a small knot-shaped ball, as if the painter were conflating the streams of blood with the knotted cords of the whips that were used for flogging before the next injury with the crown of thorns (FIG. 5). One could understand combining the two images, because there were many prints—some maybe even made in Stuchs's shop, where this one was likely to have been printed—that showed the flagella, or flogging whips, hanging from the arms of the cross. Dürer's *Mass of St. Gregory* (FIG. 7), a woodcut made in Nuremberg in 1511, the year this missal was printed, collapses the entire Passion into one symbol-rich vision of Christ rising from his tomb, showing his stigmata, with all the symbols related to his Passion arrayed around him. The flagella with knotted ends is hanging from the cross just above the prominently displayed holes in his hands. The image records a vision that Gregory had at Mass, which confirmed his faltering belief in the presence of the real body of Christ in the transformed host, the miracle that the Mass celebrates. The vision of the Risen Christ that the saint sees in the Dürer print was supposed to have taken place while a Catholic Mass was being performed, the same ritual that is described in the missal. This kind of image, full of visual information, was created for the purpose of intense personal meditation; each of the symbols around the figure of Christ recalled a different moment of the Passion, and was meant to cause the viewer to believe in Christ's suffering and in the miracle













6

of his Resurrection. Images like these were made to be meditated upon, and to provoke a deep emotional reaction in the viewer to the suffering of Christ. Could a print like the RISD print—which was, on the face of it, as impersonal as it was possible for a print to be—be considered such a print?

Without the carefully painted, discrete streams of blood, the print is only detailed enough to provide the bare outlines of the story. The rest would be filled in by the viewer, who already knew by heart all the moments of the last day of Christ's life. It is a story told in the Gospels by John, the man who stands on the right of the print and witnesses the events he will write about. It is the blood shed by Christ on the cross that accomplished the salvation of man. The blood that drips from the curved incision just below his ribcage, a wound made by the centurion Longinus after Christ was already dead, produced a miraculous mixture of blood and holy water, although the red paint makes no attempt to register a difference in the blood. In fact, the red is applied using a thicker, more pigment-saturated paint than the rest of the hand coloring. The blood that drips from the feet, neatly nailed to each other and then to the cross, is theologically the most important stream of blood. The three narrow rivulets that course down from the nail in the middle of Christ's foot to touch the hollow-eyed broken skull are about to produce a more important miracle: the blood that touches those bones washes away the sin of Adam, the original sin. Those who believe this have a chance at redemption, and for their souls, eternal life. So there is the sense of a happy ending, and this perhaps accounts for the remarkable serenity of the print. There is no gray pallor on the slightly bloody but unbroken body of Christ. The Virgin is neither sorrowing nor fainting, but she is calmly praying. John, who is often shown clutching his hands in desperate grief, still clutches, but without overt anguish. He turns his sweet face, with its wide-open eyes and frame of wavy hair, to the crucifix as if towards a vision, rather than towards the real body of a bloody, dead friend. His mouth is open and he seems to be speaking, as if already telling the story that would

FIG. 6

Lucas Cranach the Elder  
German, 1472–1553  
Nicolaus Wolrab, printer  
Luther's New Testament, 1541  
Woodcut with hand coloring on paper  
Plate: 31.8 × 19.2 cm. (12 ½ × 7 ½ in.)  
Museum Works of Art Fund 43.467

FIG. 7

Albrecht Dürer  
German, 1471–1528  
*The Mass of St. Gregory*, 1511  
Woodcut on paper  
25.2 × 20.5 cm. (9 ⅞ × 8 ⅞ in.)  
Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, The Netherlands







become the Gospel. In the missal in which this print was bound, nearby prayers invoked the healing, purifying, protective powers of Christ's blood, and the Mass itself, where wine was transformed into Christ's blood at the altar, was the act the missal-reading priest was called upon to perform.

Without the painter's work, we would have to imagine much of this, but, then, reaching into memory to help the reader imagine the Passion and the details of the Crucifixion was largely what prints like this were meant to do. The painter who added the whip-like trinities of blood at the top of the print, the parsimoniously arranged traces of blood on Christ's forehead, the delicate side wound, and the final triumphant bathing of Adam's bones in the healing sacrificial liquid, signified by the dripping paint that just barely touches the skull, confirmed the meaning of the image for the priest following the text so that he would not, like St. Gregory, falter in belief. The blue of the Virgin's robe (her usual, heavenly color) and the contrasting red worn by John made the image both richer and more memorable. The hand painted cross in a wheel at the bottom of the page helped the reader to know that this was the beginning of a new chapter of the missal. The colored print cued the effort of imagining from memory the story of Salvation by bringing the image close to the eyes, considering every swirl in the meticulously rendered grain of the real wood of the true cross, and recalling the events of the last day of Christ's life from the whips, to the crown, to the mocking, to the Crucifixion, to the affixing of the identifying sign by Pilate that gives the image its only text: INRI, for Iesus Nazareus Rex Iudaeorum (Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews). Vivid memory of this story and these events, the cutting of the side wound, and even the forecasting to the Resurrection that will take place later that night, are aided by the simple red coloring that guides readers through the texts and prayers already committed to memory. The red paint added in the rubricated letters of each page of text and the marks that signify new chapters call attention to the healing blood that was the main subject of the book, showing us how color was added to books like this one to guide the reader to a more heartfelt, engaged, and active way of reading.

*Thanks to Richard S. Field for help in identifying the possible source of the RISD Crucifixion, and to Lorenzo Baldasso for conversations about the life of the block and coloring of the print.*



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**1** "Eucharistic Prayer I" from the most recent version of the Roman canon, translated in 2000, accessed November 6, 2017, <https://www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Missal/Text/EP1-A4.pdf>.

# Double

Mara Hermano /  
Maureen C. O'Brien

Alfonso Ossorio  
American, b. Philippines, 1916–1990  
*Ida Lupino*, 1946  
Ink, wax, and watercolor on paper  
Image: 55.9 × 47 cm. (22 × 18 ½ in.)  
Gift of the Alfonso Ossorio Foundation  
2007.115.3

# Take

Spring 2018

Manual

[Mara Hermano](#): My first encounter with Alfonso Ossorio's *Portrait of Ida Lupino* immediately aroused associations with Filipino culture, craft, and religious traditions. Color is a multisensory experience in the Philippines, where Ossorio was born and spent his childhood. Manila is both a lush natural setting and a boisterous urban cacophony. One can almost hear, smell, and taste color in such an environment. In this portrait, color is used lavishly, drawing from a dominant palette of tropical heat—reds, oranges, and yellows.

While utilizing color to activate sections of the picture plane, Ossorio also uses texture and line as elements of an organizational structure. Evidence of his forays into printmaking can be seen in the precision of hatched lines that provide yet more modeling and coloristic effects. The rhythm of his marks evokes the rich craft tradition of embroidery, which reached a high point in the nineteenth century, when Philippine embroidery was exported throughout the world via the Manila-to-Acapulco galleon trade. Natural forms, either representational or abstracted and hybridized, are embedded in this craft. The lines that dominate Ossorio's portrait do not allow the eye to rest in fields of color; instead the color darts through directionally, like threads in a fabric.

Ossorio's iconography imbues the portrait with surreal mystery, elevating Ida Lupino to sainthood. The cult of saints is an enduring vestige of Spanish colonial rule in the Philippines, which still finds expression in folk Catholicism today with the practice

of donating elaborately embellished gowns or jewels to incur the special favor of a saint. The *santos*—wooden or ivory statues of saints—were among the tools Spanish friars used to convert indigenous peoples to Catholicism. Given prior practices of idolatry and ancestor worship, the veneration of statues was not a stretch, and the friars directed local artisans in the production of *santos* in wood, some with faces in ivory, after models brought from Europe. Later generations of local artisans produced figures that blended native facial characteristics. Here Lupino's face and faraway gaze are not those of a beneficent intercessor, but a victorious martial saint, her skin mottled and pockmarked by time and the elements, the rounded form behind her head suggesting a corona. Saints and goddesses are traditionally depicted with their attributes, but how do the dragonfly, bird, feather, match, what looks like an embryo, and tibia represent Lupino's character? Are they reflections of the artist's own identity? The Surrealist mystification of meaning offers no answers to such questions.

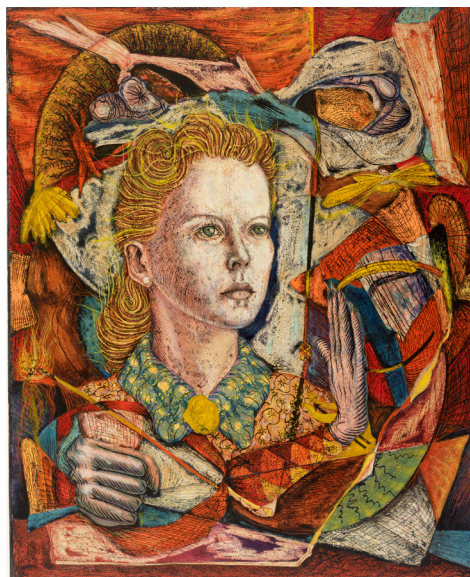
Ossorio's education in the U.K. and U.S. and his exposure to the breadth of Western artistic traditions and popular culture informed most of his artistic production and his intellectual inquiry. Whether his work reveals a latent connection to Filipino cultural traditions or exposes his struggle to negotiate the tensions between Catholicism and his own homosexuality continues to be the subject of speculation. However, these interwoven threads of his life might account for the idiosyncratic syncretism that characterizes this portrait.



**Maureen C. O'Brien:** At the end of the Second World War, Alfonso Ossorio joined his younger brother, Roberto, in Palm Springs, California. Their reunion coincided with the release of *Devotion*, a fictionalized biography of the Brontë sisters starring Ida Lupino as Emily. The twenty-eight-year-old actress had risen to fame in black and white B-movies, crime dramas whose louche content and nocturnal cinematography characterize the film-noir genre. The camera was captivated by Lupino's luminous complexion and expressive eyes, capable of communicating innocence, fear, and ambition. When she appeared on the cover of *Screen Stars* magazine in October 1946, red curls flaming and a diamond thunderbird clip on one ear, Ossorio seized the photographic matrix and transformed her into a Technicolor hallucination.

From 1937, when he posed for photographer George Platt Lynes, through his military service as a medical illustrator, Ossorio explored Surrealist portraiture. In this graphically complex example he conflates nature, Hollywood, and Christian iconography, casting Lupino as the Virgin of the Annunciation, her cool gaze transfixed by light. From a harlequin-patterned sleeve she raises a slender hand in acknowledgment; below, a grasping fist signals defiance. A winged creature descends into the dark, rolled halo of a hat brim, a dragonfly hovers above the spine of a book, and an embryo emerges from a chrysalis in the folds a floating scarf.

Executed in ink, wax, and watercolor, the painting's heated palette and overlapping imagery reflect Ossorio's first artistic memories in the Philippines. In an interview in 1968, he recalled the chromatic sensations of Manila's Spanish Colonial churches and the scrapbook collages he made from photographs of paintings and actors. Educated at Catholic boarding schools, he was introduced to Eric Gill's wood engravings in England and studied calligraphy with John Howard Benson while a student at Portsmouth Priory in Rhode Island. (He later spent a year at RISD "because Benson was teaching there.") While an undergraduate at Harvard, he wrote a senior thesis titled *On Spiritual Influences on Visual Representations of Christ*. His



extracurricular activities included designing theater sets and costumes and "polychroming a dozen life-size plaster-cast figures in the basement of the study hall" for a production of T.S. Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral*.

Although Harvard's fine-arts curriculum did not have a studio program, Ossorio enjoyed access to the conservation department and collections of the Fogg Art Museum. He learned techniques of fresco, tempera, and oil painting in the Fogg's "egg and plaster" course, and also had the opportunity to study the medium of encaustic in Egyptian Fayum portraits. That process, in which pigments are suspended in hot beeswax, witnessed a revival in twentieth-century contemporary art and became a hallmark of Ossorio's practice. He uses it here to intensify color saturation and to emphasize Lupino's translucent eyes and skin. Reversing the camera's erasure of flaws, Ossorio incised lines in the wax surface and evoked degradation in its skips. His image of Lupino combines the radiance of cinematic projection with the otherworldly aura of ancient portraits, and seems to glow from within.









# Double

Elon Cook Lee /  
Josephine Lee

# Take

Rozeal  
American, b. 1966  
*Untitled I (female)*, 2003  
Color screenprint on paper  
Image: 75.6 × 56.2 cm.  
(29 ¾ × 22 ½ in.)  
Mary B. Jackson Fund 2005.5

Spring 2018

Manual

**Elon Cook Lee:** A young Japanese woman sits, knees splayed, left hand searching into her kimono sleeve, the other hand disappearing provocatively beneath the rolls of thick fabric. Her face is serious—concentrating on something close, but unseen. Her skin a toffee brown, all except for her ears, the back of her neck, and hairline. *Untitled I (female)* is in blackface.

The artist Rozeal's nearly lifelong fascination with Japanese culture began during childhood trips to kabuki performances in Washington, D.C. *Untitled I (female)* is in kabuki blackface as interpreted through *ukiyo-e*, but unlike its cultural reference, the face paint is brown instead of white. The artist is intentionally interpreting brown skin as a mask in order to explore what is beneath it.

Rozeal identifies her subject as *ganguro*, a subgroup of Japanese youth culture that started in 1990s Tokyo. *Ganguro*, which translates literally to “black face,” is Americana in drag with unnaturally dark skin. But is blackface a uniquely American phenomenon? Is performative blackness inherently offensive? Are distinctively Japanese-style *ukiyo-e* prints of Asian youth painted in racial drag by a Black American artist racist? When Rozeal first came across the *ganguro*, she thought of the words of King Louie, the orangutan from the movie *The Jungle Book*: “Someone like me can learn to be like someone like you.”<sup>1</sup> Rozeal's prints in this series focus solely on a hip-hop-loving subgroup of *ganguro* sometimes called B-Stylers, who style themselves like Black American hip-hop heads. They lock their hair like in *Untitled I (female)* or wear cornrows with saggy jeans, standing in direct contrast to the *bihaku*, or the skin-whitening ideals and conservative mores of older generations and of society at large.

To Rozeal, *ganguro* had so intensely immersed themselves in the superficial trappings of hip-hop culture that they had moved beyond appreciation into a form of racial performance. “So you like black skin?” Rozeal asks, “You want to be like me?”<sup>2</sup> In a country where racist caricatures like Little Black Sambo are still marketed to children, *ganguro* safely mimed Blackness. Insulated, for the most part, from actual Black Americans, they could seemingly wear blackface without the four hundred years of racist American context.

Rozeal's portrayals of *ganguro* youth reference *ukiyo-e* woodblock printing techniques popularized during the Edo period (1615–1868). Like hip-hop culture and the *ganguro* themselves, *ukiyo-e* prints were “created by and for the lowly masses,” and were, at least at first, largely “ignored or despised by the privileged classes.”<sup>3</sup>

Rozeal's provocative work teases the concept of the remix—a foundational component of hip-hop music—by juxtaposing the complexities of race, class, culture, and values in a seductive *ukiyo-e* woodblock-style print that is provocative and disorienting. Left with more questions than answers, we ponder how the racist cultural heritage of the United States is reflected back to us across the Pacific Ocean, through a medium half a millennium old.

1 iona rozeal brown, “From Noh to Nah: iona rozeal brown Remixed,” in *iona rozeal brown: a3 . . . black on both sides*, ed. Andrea Barnwell. Atlanta: Spelman College Museum of Fine Art, 2004.

2 Ibid.

3 Lawrence Bickford, “Ukiyo-e Print History,” *Impressions*, no. 17 (Summer 1993), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42597774>.



[Josephine Lee](#): Performing multiple shifts in time and racial identity, *Untitled I (female)* moves from the present-day commercialization of African American culture in Japan to the historical traditions of blackface minstrel performance and orientalism in America. The female subject's darkened skin, bandeau, and afro comb point to the contemporary Japanese trend of *ganguro* ("blackface") makeup and dress and the profitable global market for African American music and culture. Her wig of black dreadlocks is also reminiscent of Topsy, the unruly character popularized by late nineteenth-century blackface minstrel enactments of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. This suggests a connection between *ganguro* culture and the long history of blackface representation in Japan, beginning with Commodore Matthew Perry's 1854 shipboard staging of blackface minstrelsy to Japanese delegates.

Though *Untitled I (female)* works as a critique of contemporary racial typecasting, its use of the style of Japanese woodblock prints from the Edo period also reminds us of the "Japan craze" of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Just as the grotesque stereotypes of minstrelsy became a standard part of American popular entertainment, exotic fantasies of Japan heavily influenced American art and consumer culture. Japanese woodblock prints and other arts and crafts became ubiquitous features of European and American homes and inspired prominent artists such as Claude Monet, Aubrey Beardsley, James McNeill Whistler, John Singer Sargent, and Mary Cassatt. *Untitled I (female)* uses the flat perspective and striking coloration of these prints, and echoes their fascination with subjects from "the floating world," the districts of urban Tokyo that offered theatrical, musical, and sexual pleasures. The figure's tiny reddened mouth, downcast eyes, and pensive expression reflect how a favorite set of subjects in *ukiyo-e* ("images of the floating world") were *bijin-ga* ("images of feminine beauty") that often depicted high-ranking courtesans or geishas. Multiple layers of racialized eroticism operate in *Untitled I (female)*; the afro comb sits alongside a traditional *kanzashi* hairpin and the languid, revealing pose suggests the



sexual allure and commodification of both Japanese and African American female bodies.

While her conspicuously darkened skin seems to comment on the white privilege assumed by the blackface performer, the figure is not drawn with white skin tones or in the white makeup often used by Japanese women of the Edo period. Though her face and neck are distinctly outlined, her "natural" skin is the same color as the pale yellow background. Thus she is conspicuous not only as a performer of blackface, but as also a decorative object that is part of an equally long American tradition. Although ostensibly targeting Japanese *ganguro* in producing and consuming black stereotypes, *Untitled I (female)* also addresses the dynamics of orientalism, and the continuing patterns of desire and capital that commodify both "black" and "yellow."





# Traces of Pigment on Mismatched Parts

## What We Can Learn from an Etruscan Urn

Gina Borromeo

Sometime around 150 BCE, this terra-cotta cinerary or ash urn (FIG. 1) was filled with the remains of a deceased person—probably a member of the lower or middle class—and deposited in a tomb, where it remained undisturbed for thousands of years. In the late 1800s or early 1900s it was found accidentally by amateur archaeologists or local farmers working the land.<sup>1</sup> Remains of the original paint applied to it more than two thousand years ago are still visible. Through its survival, through its color, this modest object allows us to more fully imagine the way most sculpture appeared in ancient times.

FIG. 1

Etruscan

Cinerarium, ca. 150 BCE

Polychrome terra-cotta

43.5 × 35.9 × 20.6 cm. (17 1/4 × 14 1/4 × 8 1/4 in.)

Helen M. Danforth Acquisition Fund 2016.47

The urn is composed of a rectangular box whose front is decorated with a relief scene of a battle and a lid in the form of a woman, intended to represent the deceased, reclining on a banqueting couch (*kline*). A spotted red pelt covers the *kline* and two pillows rest on one end. The woman's face is framed with brown curls and her hair is gathered into a small bun behind her head; an earring dangles from her right ear. She wears a white tunic with a border of inverted red triangles at the neckline. A white mantle covers her head, left shoulder and arm and is drawn tightly across her chest, and more loosely around her waist, and behind her back. Supported by her bent left arm, she lies on her left side and holds a circular wreath of flowers lightly against her lap with her right hand. A red-slipped foot peeks from beneath the folds of her tunic (FIG. 2). Similar lid figures can be found in the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the British Museum.<sup>2</sup>

Along the top of the box, the Etruscan name of the deceased is painted in dark red letters from right to left. Below a strip of dentils is a scene of four men engaged in combat. A man seen from behind, nude except for a mantle tied around his waist, fights three armed warriors with a large plow. On the left, a warrior wearing a mantle and a crested helmet lunges at the "plow hero" with a shield in his left hand and a sword in his right. Kneeling below him on one knee is another warrior, in a breastplate or cuirass, *pteruges* (layered leather military skirt), and helmet, braced against his shield and raising his sword in his right hand. The "plow hero" stands to his right. At the far right is another warrior in a mantle and helmet, holding his shield in front of him as he raises his right arm. Limbs, cloaks, and weapons intersect in strong diagonals. The dynamic composition is enhanced by the remaining traces of color: red, orange, green, blue, yellow, ochre, brown, and white can still be seen in the shields, cuirasses, *pteruges*, swords, and helmets of the fighting men (FIG. 3). As with the lid, urns with relief scenes similar to that on the RISD urn can be found at the British Museum and the Metropolitan Museum of Art.<sup>3</sup>

Although the exact find spot of the urn is unknown, similarities to those from known contexts indicate that it came from a chamber tomb in Chiusi, an ancient Etruscan site in southern Tuscany, about 80 miles south

of Florence and 100 miles north of Rome. Chiusi, set in a region with fertile soil and near to iron- and copper-rich hills, was a major agricultural and trading center during the Hellenistic period (roughly 300–90 BCE). It was a time of increasing prosperity and social mobility in southern Etruria, but it was a time of upheaval, too, as the agrarian classes were rising up against the wealthy landowning aristocracy and all of Etruria was gradually falling under

FIG. 2

Etruscan  
Cinerarium (detail), ca. 150 BCE  
Polychrome terra-cotta  
43.5 × 35.9 × 20.6 cm. (17 1/4 × 14 1/8 × 8 1/8 in.)  
Helen M. Danforth Acquisition Fund 2016.47





the power of the growing Roman Empire. The RISD urn was made in the middle of this period.

In the late 1800s and continuing into the early 1900s, Italian farmers working the land unearthed hundreds of tombs, exposing countless ancient terra-cotta and stone sculptures, bronzes, and Greek and Etruscan ceramics.<sup>4</sup> Chiusi has yielded more sculpture, most of it funerary, than any other Etruscan site.<sup>5</sup> Among the most numerous examples of funerary sculpture found were modest terra-cotta cinerary urns dating to the Hellenistic period (300–90 BCE), such as this example. Found by the hundreds, they were quickly dispersed to the art market. Today, about one thousand of these urns are held in museum and private collections throughout the world. Urns from the same tomb were often sold separately and even when archaeological context was initially recorded, rarely did it accompany the object when sold. In addition, because many works were of similar size, excavators, dealers, and collectors have interchanged the lids and boxes either unwittingly or on purpose.<sup>6</sup> In the case of the RISD urn, a former owner combined parts from two different objects sometime between the 1960s and 2005, as will be discussed further. More inscriptions have also come from Chiusi than any other Etruscan site, many in the form of names of the deceased, painted or incised on cinerary urns.<sup>7</sup> The RISD urn's box bears a partially legible inscription. Some archaeologists and epigraphers have been able to relate some urns to inscriptions on terra-cotta roof tiles used to seal graves, thus assigning them to specific tombs.<sup>8</sup>

Close examination of the Chiusine terra-cotta cinerary urns has allowed scholars to determine how they were made. Combining the use of molds with hand detailing, these examples were probably produced in the same workshops that turned out Etruscan mold-made reliefs and multiple-part, mold-made statues. In addition, the limited number of terra-cotta urn types and their apparent concentration in burials around Chiusi suggest that the urns were produced by local workshops.<sup>9</sup> The relatively compact form of the RISD urn's lid only required a single-piece mold. Some details, such as the curls that frame her face and the earring on her left ear, were







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hand-worked after molding. A small hole was pierced at the point where the two pillows meet in the back to allow gases to escape during the firing process (FIG. 4).

The making of the box was a more laborious process. The front was created by pressing a rectangular slab of clay into a mold of the battle scene.<sup>10</sup> The back of the slab was then smoothed and attached to a smaller rectangular slab that would become the base; then, the two short sides and the back were attached. This was done by applying liquid clay to the outer joins and smoothing and sealing the seams on the interior. The interior corners were strengthened with additional clay. The exterior surfaces were flattened with tools. Then the upper surface of the box was added; this top slab was cut with a rectangular hole to allow the cremated remains to be inserted into the box. A wide margin around the hole was required so that the lid could rest on the box. The lid and box were then fired. After firing, a white slip was applied to the visible surfaces of the lid and front of the box. The figure on the lid and the relief on front of the box were then painted; however, the paint tended to fade and flake off over time.<sup>11</sup>

FIGS. 3 &amp; 4

Etruscan  
Cinerarium (detail and back), ca. 150 BCE  
Polychrome terra-cotta  
43.5 × 35.9 × 20.6 cm. (17 1/4 × 14 1/8 × 8 1/8 in.)  
Helen M. Danforth Acquisition Fund 2016.47  
Photos courtesy of Royal-Athena Galleries

The RISD urn shows traces of white slip on the lid and front of the box. Traces of red paint on the surface of other urns indicate that red was used as a primer for the brightly colored pigments.<sup>12</sup> Different shades of blue, green, red, orange, yellow, brown, and white were used on this example. In 2017, X-ray fluorescence analysis was conducted on the painted portions to determine which elements were present, in hopes that some of the pigments or substances used by the artisans could be identified.<sup>13</sup> For a discussion of the results of our analysis, please see the sidebar discussion by Catherine Cooper on page 71.

The mold-made urns from Chiusi have lids with readily identifiable types such as men or women reclining or fully recumbent on a banqueting couch.<sup>14</sup> The owners of these modest urns adopted a longstanding Etruscan mode of representing the deceased reclining on the lid of a sarcophagus.<sup>15</sup> At the same time, they appropriated the banqueting practice of a higher social class, the aristocracy, for their self-representation at the moment of death. But are these figures actually shown in the act of banqueting? As scholar Theresa Huntsman points out, the figures on the lids never hold food or drink; instead women hold garlands, fans, and mirrors. When the figures do hold vessels they are often phialae or paterae—bowls used for liquid offerings, which belong more in religious than banqueting contexts.<sup>16</sup> The lid figures, who are clearly presenting the objects they hold, are participating in an activity associated with banqueting. Depicted in an anticipatory state, the figures are about to pour libations or to hand off garlands or fans before the banquet begins.<sup>17</sup> To quote Huntsman, “The effigies are in a liminal state: they recline, yet they contribute to creating an atmosphere of preparation and activity. The viewer is not privileged to know what will transpire next, but the exact nature of the narrative does not matter. What is important is that the lid figures are understood to be active participants in an extended event that takes place in the tomb and in the afterlife.”<sup>18</sup>

The reliefs on the boxes stand in contrast to the reclining figures on the lid. Three main types of relief scenes are found on the box fronts.<sup>19</sup> The most popular, drawn from Greek myth, depicts the mortal combat between Eteokles and Polyneikes, sons of King Oedipus, who were fighting over control of Thebes. Scholars have interpreted this scene as a rallying cry for Etruscans to band together against Rome, the common enemy. Spivey sees these urns, which have been found only in Chiusine contexts, as urgent messages in second-century BCE Chiusi, “broadcasting the disastrous results incurred when brothers fight among themselves.”



The second type, depicted on the RISD urn, is of a man fighting three warriors using a plow as a weapon. It has been identified as the Greek farmer Echetlos, who came to the aid of Athenians in their war against the Persians in the fifth century BCE.<sup>20</sup> An Etruscan equivalent to Echetlos is perhaps a more likely identification. This reading of the man with a plow as a local hero rising to the aid of neighbors to ward off an invading power could be easily combined with other interpretations of this image: as a rallying cry for the agrarian classes of southern Etruria and an illustration of their plight against the encroaching Roman army.<sup>21</sup> Others see the “plow hero” as an Etruscan hero with chthonic associations who signals death to warriors.<sup>22</sup> Our still-incomplete knowledge of Etruscan history precludes a secure identification.<sup>23</sup>

The third type is the head of the Gorgon, considered in Etruria and Greece to be an apotropaic image, or one that averts evil. It is possible that the violent scenes of battle on the first two relief types also performed a protective role for the cremated remains contained in the urns.<sup>24</sup>

The artisans who made these urns were influenced by a long tradition of Etruscan painted terra-cotta sculpture, such as monumental architectural statues like the Apollo of Veii and the colorful *antefixes* (ornaments that conceal the ends of roof tiles) on Etruscan temples.<sup>25</sup> Contemporary large-scale funerary monuments also could have served as inspiration, as seen in the painted terra-cotta sarcophagus of Seianti Hanunia Tlasnasa at the British Museum (FIG. 5).<sup>26</sup> This example belonged to a member of the upper class, as indicated by the rich finds in the tomb as well as the clothes and jewelry she is depicted wearing. It is also from Chiusi, and dates to about the same period as the RISD urn: 150–140 BCE.



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FIG. 5  
Etruscan  
Sarcophagus, ca. 150–140 BCE  
Terra-cotta  
British Museum 1887,0402.1  
© The Trustees of the British Museum

Made on a grand scale from the same material as the RISD urn, the sarcophagus presents carefully worked details of a high quality, indicating the level of craftsmanship available to the wealthy of Chiusi. Like the urn, it was covered in white slip then painted, but with a greater variety of colors.<sup>27</sup> In contrast to Seianti’s sarcophagus, which must have been specially commissioned, the urn was an inexpensive funerary item to which many more people had access. Its owner probably would have valued colorful liveliness and legibility over quality or uniqueness.<sup>28</sup>

The edges of the RISD lid extend well beyond the sides of the box, indicating that the lid and box did not originally belong together. In fact, at some point

between the 1960s and 2005, a previous owner brought these two elements together. (Please see information below for more on the provenance of the urn.) The figure on the lid is unmistakably a woman. However, the name inscribed on the box belongs to a man. The legible portion of the inscription on the box, ARNTH.ANE.A ... , begins on the right corner of the box, and reads from right to left.<sup>29</sup> The box once contained the remains of a man named Arnth Ane. With twenty-two recorded inscriptions with their name, the Ane family was quite well known in Chiusi.<sup>30</sup>

Although the lid and box were not originally united, the combination of a woman on the lid with the “plow hero” relief on the box is entirely plausible. In fact, many of the warrior-scene boxes were paired with lids depicting women reclining or fully recumbent. Etruscans did not find the combination of a woman at ease with a violent scene of war anomalous. Some women’s graves in Etruria even contained bronze weapons traditionally associated with men.<sup>31</sup> Perhaps it is because women were being recognized as responsible for the continuity of future generations, and for ensuring the line of warriors. And if we were to accept an apotropaic function for the scenes on the boxes, then women as well as men should benefit from that protection.

Members of different social classes might purchase the same type of urn and be buried in the same chamber tomb. Freedmen and members of higher social classes were mixed in these tombs, which could hold several generations of the same family. Hellenistic tombs have a very long passageway (*dromos*) that ended in a burial chamber or in a vestibule that opened onto multiple burial chambers. Burial urns and sarcophagi were placed at eye level on benches that had been carved into the tomb chamber walls; burial goods were deposited next to the urns and sarcophagi. Over time, as the burial chambers filled, the passageway itself became a place for burials, with families adding niches on either side to accommodate more urns; these niches were sealed with terra-cotta roof tiles inscribed with the names of the deceased.<sup>32</sup>

#### PROVENANCE

##### Chest

Ex coll. Baron Woldemar von Rosen, early 1900s  
(The Swedish ambassador to Cairo, Baron von Rosen was a collector of Egyptian art and also collected art from other cultures. An old label in Swedish on the interior of the box misidentifies the relief scene as Eteokles and Polyneikes.)

Royal Athena Galleries, 1960s

Edward J. Smith (Weehawken, NJ), 1960s (acquired from the Royal-Athena Galleries)

##### Lid

Sotheby’s, date unknown

##### Chest & Lid (Together)

Private collection, late 1960s and 2005 (chest and lid combined during this time)

Hotel Drouot, Paris, December 15, 2005

Royal Athena Galleries, 2007 (Eisenberg, [Art of the Ancient World](#), 2007, no. 103)

E.C.R. Collection (Wassenaar, The Netherlands), presumably 2007–2016

Royal Athena Galleries, 2016 (Eisenberg, [Art of the Ancient World](#), 2016, no. 75)

RISD Museum, 2016–present (acquired from the Royal-Athena Galleries)



Let us imagine the scene as this cinerary urn was brought to its original context, a multigenerational chamber tomb in Chiusi. The deceased's family members have the chance to revisit the urns of other deceased ancestors when they bring this urn to the tomb. The relatives enter and begin their long walk down the passageway to the burial chamber. They arrive. Some of the surrounding lid figures look like they are preparing for an event to begin, a few appear to wait in anticipation, and others seem to be on the verge of waking up.<sup>33</sup> What an experience it must have been to be in this space, sensing the gazes of ancestors as represented by the lid figures, observing them prepare for a ritual that we don't yet know or understand. Visitors would have happened upon their ancestors in the midst of preparations, gestures frozen in time. Even in the dark tomb, the brilliant colors painted on the urns would have been strikingly visible in the flickering light of the lamps.

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<sup>1</sup> I wish to offer many thanks to Dr. Theresa Huntsman, whose research on Hellenistic cinerary urns from Chiusi I relied on extensively during the research process leading to the acquisition of this urn for the RISD Museum and in the writing of this essay. See especially Theresa Huntsman, "Hellenistic Etruscan Cremation Urns from Chiusi," *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 49 (2014), 141–50; and "Inscribed Identities: Figural Cinerary Urns and Bilingualism in Late Etruscan Funerary Contexts at Chiusi," *Etruscan Studies* 18 (2015), 81–96. She also kindly gave me access to her unpublished dissertation, which examined more than eight hundred urns of this type: "Eternal Personae: Chiusine Cinerary Urns and the Construction of Etruscan Identity," PhD diss., Washington University, 2014. I also offer a big thank you to Professor David Murray of Brown University, who did XRF analysis on the pigments of the RISD urn.

<sup>2</sup> Terracotta cinerary urn (96.9.221), New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/246265>; and cinerary urn (1805.0703.177), London: British Museum, [http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection\\_online/collection\\_object\\_details.aspx?objectId=410974&partId=1&searchText=1805.0703.177+&page=1](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=410974&partId=1&searchText=1805.0703.177+&page=1). For additional examples, see Huntsman, "Hellenistic Etruscan Cremation Urns from Chiusi," 149, n. 9.

<sup>3</sup> Cinerary urns (1805.0703.177 and 2009.5008.1), London: British Museum, [http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection\\_online/collection\\_object\\_details.aspx?objectId=410974&partId=1&searchText=1805.0703.177+&page=1](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=410974&partId=1&searchText=1805.0703.177+&page=1) and [http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection\\_online/collection\\_object\\_details.aspx?objectId=3216215&partId=1&searchText=2009.5008.1&page=1](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=3216215&partId=1&searchText=2009.5008.1&page=1). Terracotta cinerary urns (96.9.220 and 96.9.219), New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/246264> and <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/246263>.

<sup>4</sup> E. Richardson, "Clusium," in Richard Stillwell, William L. MacDonald, Marian Holland McAlister, eds., *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Classical Sites* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976). <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.04.0006:entry=clusium>.

<sup>5</sup> Richardson, "Clusium," <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.04.0006:entry=clusium>.

<sup>6</sup> Huntsman, "Hellenistic Etruscan Cremation Urns from Chiusi," 141–48.

<sup>7</sup> More than 2,700 inscriptions can be traced to Chiusi. See Huntsman, "Eternal Personae," 33 with earlier citations, especially Enrico Benelli, "Le iscrizioni funerarie chiusine di età ellenistica," *Studi Etruschi* 64 (1998) 225–63; see especially 229–30.

- 8 For some examples, see discussion in Dominique Briquel, "Rivista di epigrafia etrusca, no. 48: Clusium, loci incerti," *Studi Etruschi* 73 (2009), 317–18.
- 9 Adriano Maggiani, *Artigianato artistico: L'Etruria settentrionale interna in età ellenistica* (Milan: Electa, 1985), 100–2; Huntsman, "Eternal Personae," 47–50.
- 10 Our urn must have been manufactured when the mold was getting worn because the sculptural details are no longer crisp, for which the paint must have compensated. Unfortunately, we cannot appreciate the full effect of the original paint because of its current condition.
- 11 Huntsman, "Eternal Personae," 46–48, where she cites the work of Marina Sclafani, *Urni fittili chiusine e perugine di età medio e tardo ellenistica* (Rome: Giorgio Bretschneider Editore, 2010), 17–26.
- 12 Etruscan cinerary urn (64.123), Bloomington: Indiana University Art Museum, [http://www.indiana.edu/~iuam/online\\_modules/colors/objects.php?p=68](http://www.indiana.edu/~iuam/online_modules/colors/objects.php?p=68). Etruscan artisans used the same palette for their funerary art: their cinerary urns and monumental tomb paintings are executed in the same colors.
- 13 For a recent technical investigation of Etruscan polychromy, see Cecilie Brøns, Signe Skriver Hedegaard, and Maria Louise Sargent, "Painted Faces. Investigations of Polychromy on Etruscan Antefixes from the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek," *Etruscan Studies* 19 (2016), 23–67.
- 14 For a full discussion, see Huntsman, "Eternal Personae," with extensive bibliography.
- 15 This motif was invented by the Etruscans and copied by the Romans. Nancy H. Ramage and Andrew Ramage, *Roman Art: Romulus to Constantine*, 6th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson, 2015), 51–53.
- 16 Huntsman, "Eternal Personae," 163–66; Huntsman points out a similar phenomenon in Etruscan wall painting, quoting J. R. Jannot, trans. J. Whitehead, *Religion in Ancient Etruria* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2005), 47: In the paintings from the Tomb of the Triclinium in Tarquinia, the banqueters "seem neither to drink nor to eat, but to mime a banquet, as if the rite were less about food, than about gestures."
- 17 Huntsman, "Eternal Personae," 167.
- 18 Huntsman, "Eternal Personae," 168.
- 19 Huntsman, "Hellenistic Etruscan Cremation Urns from Chiusi," 145. For a discussion of the iconography of the reliefs on the boxes, see Laurent Hugot, "Les urnes et les sarcophages étrusques dans les musées d'Aix-en-Provence, d'Arles, et de Nîmes," *Studi Etruschi* 73 (2009), 175–80.
- 20 For a discussion of various interpretations of the "plow hero," see Laurent Hugot, "Les urnes et les sarcophages étrusques dans les musées d'Aix-en-Provence, d'Arles, et de Nîmes," *Studi Etruschi* 73 (2009), 175–78.
- 21 Nigel Spivey, *Etruscan Art* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1997), 160–61.
- 22 Witt, "Classical Legend or Contemporary Resistance Figure?" 197, with citations to earlier sources.
- 23 Jean Macintosh Turfa, *Catalogue of the Etruscan Gallery of the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, 2005), 269.
- 24 Huntsman, "Hellenistic Etruscan Cremation Urns from Chiusi," 145.
- 25 Jan Stubbe Østergaard, "Emerging Colors: Roman Sculptural Polychromy Revived," in Roberta Panzanelli, Eike D. Schmidt, Kenneth Lapatin, eds. *The Color of Life: Polychromy and Sculpture from Antiquity to the Present*, exh. cat. (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2008), 43–44.
- 26 Sarcophagus (1887.0402.1), London: British Museum, [http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection\\_online/collection\\_object\\_details/collection\\_image\\_gallery.aspx?assetId=34727001&objectId=466847&partId=1](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details/collection_image_gallery.aspx?assetId=34727001&objectId=466847&partId=1). See also Judith Swaddling and John Prag, eds., *Seianti Hanunia Tlesnasa: The Story of an Etruscan Noblewoman. British Museum Occasional Paper Number 100* (London: British Museum Press, 2002). It is possible that when the Etruscans became exposed to Greek sculpture through the colonies in southern Italy and in later times through the Roman conquest of Greece, they might have wanted to make their terra-cottas resemble marble, thus preparing the surface with white slip or paint to receive additional pigments.
- 27 Louise Joyner, "Scientific Examination of the Pigments and Ceramic Fabric from the Sarcophagus of Seianti Hanunia Tlesnasa," in Judith Swaddling and John Prag, eds., *Seianti Hanunia Tlesnasa: The Story of an Etruscan Noblewoman. The British Museum Occasional Paper Number 100* (London: British Museum, 2002), 49–52.
- 28 Constanze Witt, "Classical Legend or Contemporary Resistance Figure? The Hero with the Plow on an Etruscan Urn in the Bayly Museum," *Southeast College Art Conference Review* 12/3 (1993), 199.
- 29 I am grateful to Professor Rex Wallace for directing me to the following references: Briquel, "Rivista di epigrafia etrusca, no. 48," 317–18; Gerhard Meiser, Helmut Rix, Valentina Belfiore, and Sindy Kluge, *Etruskische Text: Editio Minor* (Hamburg: Baar Verlag, 2014) CI 1.2837.
- 30 Briquel, "Rivista di epigrafia etrusca, no. 48," 317–18.
- 31 For example, the woman in the Regolini-Galassi tomb in Cerveteri was buried with many objects inscribed with the name *Larthia*. Among the objects recovered in her burial chamber were a number of pieces of gold jewelry, a gold breastplate, parts of a throne and footstool, a metal couch, bronze cauldrons and shields, and many weapons. See Nigel Spivey, *Etruscan Art* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1997), 50–51.
- 32 Huntsman, "Hellenistic Etruscan Cremation Urns from Chiusi," 149.
- 33 Ibid.



## Chemical Analysis of Pigments on the Etruscan Cinerarium

Catherine Cooper

Identifying pigments on ancient art helps us understand not only what techniques or tools were used in the creation of an object, but also can give us insight into what has happened to the piece over the course of its existence—including whether or not there have been restorations.

With the Etruscan cinerarium, it was important that we use a non-destructive method to identify the pigments. In collaboration with Dr. David Murray, a geochemistry professor at Brown University, we used X-ray fluorescence spectrometry (XRF) to identify the major elements present in different pigmented areas of the Etruscan cinerarium. XRF employs high-energy X-rays to bombard a small section of an object's surface, causing electrons bound in the inner shells of atoms to be ejected.<sup>1</sup> Once "excited" by X-rays, each element emits a characteristic wavelength of energy which can be measured. An XRF spectrum is built by counting the number of wavelengths of each element emitted from that particular section of the object's surface.

XRF spectra were taken at eleven locations on the body and lid of the cinerarium. The high proportion of calcium (Ca) present on the painted surfaces compared to the unpainted interior of the box (location 4) could indicate that a preparatory chalk layer was applied to the exterior painted surfaces before more pigment was applied. Analysis of the red and yellow pigments reveal iron (Fe) as a major component, which is consistent with the use of iron-oxide colorants.<sup>2</sup> The blue-green pigment used on the shield held by the kneeling warrior contained calcium, silicon (Si), iron, aluminum (Al), and copper (Cu). The presence of copper, silicon, and calcium are consistent with the presence of Egyptian blue pigment ( $\text{CaCuSi}_4\text{O}_{10}$ ) mixed with an iron oxide to create the blue-green blend.<sup>3</sup> These data are consistent with analyses of other pieces of Etruscan art, where the techniques of blending pigments and painting over a primer layer have also been noted.<sup>4/5</sup>

Of the eleven areas examined, only one showed conclusive evidence of being restored. Chemically, the pigment composition of the woman's right hand (location 7) includes a high proportion of titanium, a primary component of titanium white ( $\text{TiO}_2$ ). As a pigment, titanium white was not developed until the 1800s, and it was only put into mainstream production in the early 1900s.<sup>6</sup> The presence of titanium indicates that the hand was retouched at some time during or after the nineteenth century.



**Table 1: Location numbers and descriptions of where XRF spectra were collected on RISD's Etruscan cinerarium**

Location	Description
1	Red shield
2	Green side of shield
3	White bottom border
4	Undecorated interior ceramic rim of urn body
5	Ochre on outside of shield
6	Red slipper
7	Proper right hand
8	White pillow
9	White robe near feet
10	Center back of shawl/scarf
11	Red stripe on back of pillow

<sup>1</sup> M. Stephen Shackley, ed., "An Introduction to X-ray Fluorescence (XRF) Analysis in Archaeology," in *X-ray Fluorescence Spectrometry (XRF) in Geoarchaeology* (New York: Springer, 2011), 7–44.

<sup>2</sup> Louise Joyner, "Scientific Examination of the Pigments and Ceramic Fabric from the Sarcophagus of Seianti Hanunia Tlesnasa," in Judith Swaddling and John Prag, eds., *Seianti Hanunia Tlesnasa: The Story of an Etruscan Noblewoman. The British Museum Occasional Paper Number 100* (London: British Museum, 2002), 49–52.

<sup>3</sup> Ioanna Kakoulli, *Greek Painting Techniques and Materials from the Fourth to the First Century BC* (London: Archetype Publications Ltd, 2009).

<sup>4</sup> Cecilie Brøns, Signe Skriver Hedegaard, and Maria Louise Sargent, "Painted Faces: Investigations of Polychromy on Etruscan Antefixes from the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek," *Etruscan Studies* 19 (2016), 23–67.

<sup>5</sup> Joyner, "Scientific Examination of the Pigments and Ceramic Fabric," 49–52.

<sup>6</sup> W. Stanley Taft Jr. and James W. Mayer, eds., *The Science of Paintings* (New York: Springer, 2000), 89–90.

# How To

**Restore Color Using the Pigments of Your Imagination**

by Cecily Nishimura, Lee Dussault, Madelyn Perez,  
Marissa Stanzione, and Travis Bonanca





During the summer of 2017, we, along with some other high school students in the RISD Summer Teen Intensive program, learned about polychromy. Polychromy refers to the use of many colors. Ancient Greco-Roman works were polychromed; when many of these works were excavated, it was known that they were originally colored. However, in the eighteenth century the art historian Johann Joachim Winckelmann championed the idea of pure white sculpture, changing the way we see them now. What was so baffling to all of us was that today, media only seems to depict these statues as white—even in films, shows, or games set in the time of ancient Greece and Rome. We had been convinced that these statues were always white, and that the people they were sculpted in honor of were also white.

When we first looked at ancient Greek and Roman art, we assumed that the uneven coloring of the statues was merely due to age or being dirty, rather than seeing it as a clue to the long lost color of the piece. As a diverse group of teens, we were astonished to learn that the painting on these figures could have been representative of the skin tones within our group. This hit home further for many of us as we discovered that they were stripped of their color in order to retain ideas about the “purity” of sheer white. We wondered why, if the museum is supposed to present information on these statues, it would withhold the fact that these statues were originally painted. We explored the idea of this history having been erased, and were introduced to scholar Sarah Bond through Vice’s interview with her. Her work inspired our group to dig deeper into the issue.

Our work culminated in a coloring book, and we’d like you to use it. These pages invite you to color our drawings while thinking about the sculptures’ original color, because most of us like color. We hope this gives you an opportunity to think about whiteness and the erasure of color, and what this can mean to the ways we think about—and question—art and art history.

#### FURTHER LEARNING

“Marble Helped Scholars Whitewash Ancient History.” *Vice News Tonight*, published July 18, 2017. Video, 4:03. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=86PD8o6xe\\_4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=86PD8o6xe_4).

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## Portfolio

Spring 2018

Manual

(1)

Japanese  
Inro with Design of Chinese Scholars  
in Landscape, 1700–1900  
Lacquered wood  
6.3 × 7.6 cm. (2 ½ × 3 in.)  
Gift of Misses Anna and Louisa Case 20.086

(2)

JVC (Victor Company of Japan, Ltd.)  
Japanese, 1927–present  
Videosphere (model 3240), 1970  
CRT television with plastic, glass, and metal  
components  
Diameter: 33 × 25.4 cm. (13 × 10 in.)  
Gift of Glenn Gissler 2010.109.1

(3)

Merle Temkin  
American, b. 1937  
*London Plane Tree*, 2011  
Oil on paper  
43.8 × 38.1 cm. (17 ¼ × 15 in.)  
Gift of the artist 2013.42  
© Merle Temkin

(4)

Kara Walker (RISD MFA 1994, Printmaking)  
American, b. 1969  
*Whip*, 2014  
Watercolor on paper  
57.2 × 76.2 cm. (22 ½ × 30 in.)  
Paula and Leonard Granoff Fund 2015.15.2  
Artwork © Kara Walker, courtesy of  
Sikkema Jenkins & Co., New York

(5)

Alexis Rockman  
American, b. 1962  
*Iguaca*, 2011  
From the portfolio *SEA*  
Lithograph on paper  
76.2 × 55.9 cm. (30 × 22 in.)  
Gift of Exit Art 2012.133.16  
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(ARS), New York

(6)

Henri Rousseau  
French, 1844–1910  
*War*, 1895  
Lithograph on orange paper  
25.8 × 40.3 cm. (10 ¾ × 15 ½ in.)  
Museum purchase: gift of Mrs. Murray S. Danforth  
53.321

(7)

David Barnes  
American, b. 1964  
*Yellow Suits*, 2008  
Watercolor over graphite on paper  
31.1 × 36.2 cm. (12 ¼ × 14 ½ in.)  
Gift of the artist 2009.109  
© David Barnes

(8)

English  
Teapot, early 1800s  
Transfer-printed earthenware  
Height: 14 cm. (5 ½ in.)  
Gift of Alice Brownell, Mrs. Ernst R. Behrend and  
Alfred S. Brownell 29.231

(9)

Lynne Harlow  
American, b. 1968  
*Shake Some Action*, 2006  
Plexiglas and nails  
22.9 × 99.1 × 2.5 cm. (9 × 39 × 1 in.)  
Mary B. Jackson Fund 2013.7.1  
© Lynne Harlow, courtesy of the artist  
and Cade Tompkins Projects

(10)

Jean-Démouthène Dugourc, designer  
French, 1749–1825  
Maison Pernon & Cie, manufacturer  
French, 1753–1808  
*The Altar* (L'Autel) Furnishing Textile Panel, 1788  
Yellow silk satin weave with white weft patterning  
Length: 175.3 cm. (69 in.)  
Elizabeth T. and Dorothy N. Casey Fund 2007.32.2

(11)

Antoine Chintreuil  
French, 1814–1873  
*White Chateau*, ca. 1855  
Oil on canvas  
59.1 × 99.4 cm. (23 ¼ × 39 ½ in.)  
Museum Gift Fund 71.079

(12)

Italian  
Woman's Knitted Jacket, 1630–1650  
Knitted silk and metal-wrapped thread  
Center back length: 50.8 cm. (20 in.)  
Helen M. Danforth Acquisition Fund 2014.19

(13)

Egyptian  
Baboon Amulet, 525–343 BCE  
Faience  
Height: 4.5 cm. (1 ¾ in.)  
Anonymous gift 1988.097

(14)

Nan Goldin  
American, b. 1953  
*Vivienne in the green dress*, NYC, 1980  
Color chromogenic print  
Image: 49.7 × 33.4 cm. (19 ⅞ × 13 ½ in.)  
Walter H. Kimball Fund 2003.8  
© Nan Goldin, courtesy Matthew Marks Gallery

(15)

Hayley Tompkins  
Scottish, b. 1971  
*Stick XIII*, 2015  
Acrylic and photograph on found object  
30 × 13 × 8 cm. (11 ⅞ × 5 ½ × 3 ¼ in.)  
Richard Brown Baker Fund for Contemporary  
British Art 2016.4  
© Hayley Tompkins

(16)

American  
Women's Boots, ca. 1860  
Silk plain weave with silk laces  
Length: 26 cm. (10 ¼ in.)  
Gift of Mrs. Francis Boardman 55.025.31

(17)

Agnieszka Brzeżańska  
Polish, b. 1972  
*Untitled*, 2007  
Oil on canvas  
115.6 × 88.9 cm. (45 ½ × 35 in.)  
Gift of Avo Samuelian and Hector Manuel Gonzalez  
2017.19.7  
© Agnieszka Brzeżańska

(18)

Andre Bradley (RISD MFA 2015, Photography)  
American, b. 1987  
*Wallet-Size Poster Child*, 2015  
Xerox print, board clip, paint marker, and nails  
15.2 × 61 cm. (6 × 24 in.)  
Georgianna Sayles Aldrich Fund 2015.62.2  
© Andre Bradley

(19)

Edward Lear  
English, 1812–1888  
*Capo di Noli, from Capo Basteggi*, 1864  
Watercolor and ink on blue paper  
17 × 50.3 cm. (6 ⅞ × 19 ⅞ in.)  
Anonymous gift 81.171.8

(20)

Nigerian (Yoruba)  
*Adire Eleko* Textile Length, ca. 1970  
Cotton damask weave, indigo starch-resist dyed  
195.6 × 88.9 cm. (77 × 35 in.)  
Gift of Douglas Jansson and Diane Brandley  
1995.073.1

(21)

Haitian  
Baron Samedi Vodou Flag, before 1989  
Cotton plain weave with beads and sequins  
32 × 32 cm. (12 ¾ × 12 ¾ in.)  
Mary B. Jackson Fund 2016.57.1

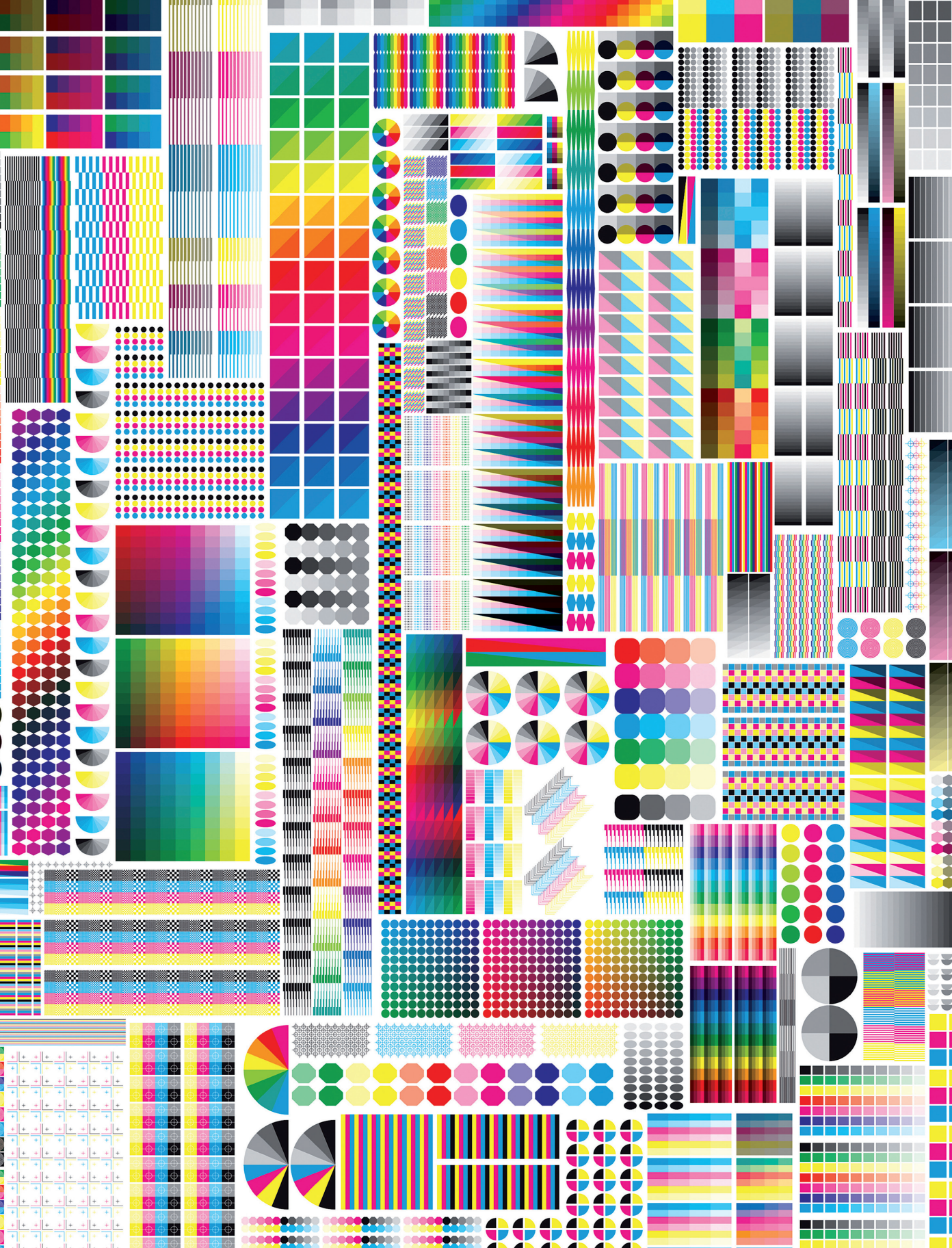
(22)

Richard Wilson  
British, 1713/1714–1782  
*Grotta Ferrata*, 1754  
Black and white chalks on blue (now faded) paper  
Mount: 35.5 × 49.6 cm. (14 × 19 ½ in.)  
Anonymous gift 69.154.28

(23)

Bow Porcelain Factory, manufacturer  
English, 1748–1776  
Pair of Dolphins, ca. 1755  
Soft-paste porcelain with polychrome enamel  
11.1 × 11.4 × 5.7 cm. (4 ¾ × 4 ½ × 2 ¼ in.)  
Gift of the estate of Abby Rockefeller Mauze  
78.046.4







(cover)

Susan Hiller, *Small Study for Homage to Marcel Duchamp* (detail), 2012.  
From the series *Billboard for Edinburgh*. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. J. Scott Burns.  
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